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**Customer No. 26874**  
PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE  
**Atty. Docket: END909.0511036**

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Frederick E. Shelton et al. : Paper No:  
Serial No. 10/615,974 : Group Art Unit: 3721  
Filed: July 9, 2003 : Examiner: P. Durand  
For: SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT INCORPORATING A TAPERED  
FIRING BAR FOR INCREASED FLEXIBILITY AROUND THE  
ARTICULATION JOINT

AMENDMENT & RESPONSE

Mail Stop Amendment  
Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

In response to the Office Action, dated June 9, 2005, please amend the above-identified application as follows.

Amendments to the Claims begin on page 2 of this paper.

Remarks begin on page 6 of this paper.